BETWEEN CHRESIS AND CHARIS –

The Possibility of the Female Subject in Foucault's Isomorphic Theater

PART ONE

A. Methodological Concerns, Hypothesis

1. Continuities. The suggestion Foucault leaves us with at the conclusion of Volume III of The History of Sexuality, "The Care of the Self," is simple. His claim is that, while the prescriptive codes we find in classical Greek antiquity superficially resemble that of later Christian morality, the latter will derive from a "profoundly altered ethics and a different way of constituting oneself as the ethical subject of one's ethical behavior." (HS VIII, 240) Beyond a certain point, a parent cannot take responsibility for their child's trajectory. Analogously, Greek stylizations of the sexual subject cannot fully account for Christian emphasis on "decipherment of the soul," a "purificatory hermeneutics of desires, or its "mode of ethical fulfillment that tends toward self-renunciation." (HS III 239-240)) The distinction is between morality, as reactive social more or convention, and ethics, as the active stylization of habit that determines an individual's character. Foucault makes this distinction, notably, for strategic reasons. Repeatedly in these three volumes, Foucault has identified repression as only one form of power – and a prohibitive moral code as merely the partial aspect of a broader, and more dynamic, domain of the stylization of existence. This is a crucial move for anyone wishing to uncover the bodies and pleasures behind "sexuality," the will to truth behind truths -- to restore discourse to its character as an event

2. Discontinuities. While Foucault's method, as it works in The History of Sexuality, is not to establish absolute ruptures in chronology, neither does it affirm continuities. Power dynamics, i.e., the positive relationships between scattered formations of discourse, are left unexamined. Even if The History of Sexuality does much to establish the nascent sexual subject in Greece as *genealogically* independent of the later Christian sinner, Foucault does not yet confront the *critical* continuity between that Christian subject and its Greek ancestry. Even if the Greeks cannot take responsibility for the formation of the Christian subject, this heritage is not arbitrary. Christianity itself has recently birthed the self-governing scientific conscience of neoliberalism. This neoliberalism continually reactivates Christianity's principle of self-renunciation, even if, for example, a theology is absent. Similarly, Christianity has clearly grounded the primary strategies by which it vies for

dominance in analogous strategies, indeed even stylizations, from Greek antiquity. Indeed, as Foucault's interviewer suggests in an interview entitled *Sexual Choice, Sexual Act,* we often find that "the more free and open a sexual practice is, the more one can afford to be reticent or oblique in talking about it." (Sexual Choice, Sexual Act, p.18) The fact that self-renunciation seems more explicit in Christianity does not mean that self-renunciation as an ethical strategy was not present in Greek society, but that it was practiced by a smaller population and thus did not require the same degree of enforcement. I will argue that very specific rules of exclusion, division, and symbolization, practices, pedagogies and institutions -- down to the academy itself -- were already at work locating the Greek male as the subject of discourse prior to his explicit subjectivation within it, and even as they concealed his forceful self-production.

Further, I argue that we can even interpret apparent *discontinuities* in the explicit discourse as positive evidence for this continuity. Careful analysis of a seemingly contradictory shift in models of subjectivation valued by the dominant culture in the West – a shift from a model of the virile male in Greek antiquity, to the model of the virginal female in the Christian epoch -- will actually make this continuity apparent. Yet, it is my contention that establishing this continuity is still commensurable with Foucault's conclusions. Firstly, this is because it seems appropriate to characterize The History of Sexuality as a genealogical, rather than critical enterprise. The critical method analyzes the rules of exclusion in a discourse according to the principle of reversal. Here we recognize, author, discipline, and will to truth, as the negative activity of the rarefaction, and unification of discourse. On the other hand, the genealogical analysis studies the scattered and irregular formation of discourse. If *The History of Sexuality* deploys a genealogical analysis, then perhaps the critical analysis of the sexual subject would establish the negatively-produced unity between the Greek and Christian sexual subjects. We can do this by framing the critique in terms of the subterranean elements of the discourse, by referring back to the rules of exclusion that, as Foucault says, themselves rely upon institutions, pedagogies, and practices, for their effect.

Hypothesis. My working hypothesis is that the continuity I aim to establish is consistent with Foucault's discontinuity. While Foucault identifies an *absence of continuity*, an absence which is immanent to discourse, I would identify an *absent continuity*, which is the unifying force of discourse precisely insofar as it is not exhausted by the discursive signifier. The two different types of absence may coexist. However, "to tell the truth, these two tasks are not always exactly complementary. We do not find, on the one hand, forms of rejection,

exclusion, consolidation or attribution, and, on a more profound level, the spontaneous pouring forth of discourse, which immediately before or after its manifestation, finds itself submitted to selection and control." (DL, 233) If my reading of his genealogical-critical distinction is correct, my critical analysis could call into question whether Foucault's concept of discourse has a domain broad enough to include both the ethical and moral techniques of the self – i.e., whether discourse can be both style and code. An implicit code has already helped produce any technique that expressed on the level of speech – even if that technique is an ethical stylization of existence and not yet a moral code. This would mean that rules of exclusion constitute a first 'moral code,' a code which itself produces an individual who is later capable of both stylization and presence as a subject in discourse. This "code" precedes any discursive valuation, even if the code only becomes *explicit* after the valuation, or stylization, does.

Nietzsche, perhaps, would refer to the production of code as the calcification of metaphors (ethical style) into concepts (moral code), which then, in their claim to objective rigor, conceal and forget their own creative, and hence active, bodily origins. Yet, even between the body and the metaphor there is not a free play, but a principle of selection. Foucault's text establishes a disruption positively on the level of discourse-analysis. The absence which precedes and pervades it, to which I refer, is again, not the absence of discourse but the positive existence of power. Just as ethical stylizations, *techniques of existence,* form the foundation of any moral code, so the linguistic "I" must be preceded by a force or "body" which is its foundation, before which its power pales. This force's literal and symbolic power over other forces is what founds the power of the subject – the power of discourse itself. The dominating force here first constitutes the forces it dominates *as bodies.* In this way, the force originally behind the linguistic "I" produces both one's own body and the body of others. But to do this, *force must think its own discursive subject as prior to its body,* and attribute only partial selfhood to those it dominates – for example, women and slaves. The necessity of this misrecognition is the reason that the literal and symbolic qualities of this 'discursive' subject must overlap and intermingle with one another.

The ambiguity results in the self-renunciating domination of one's own body. The calcifying misrecognition of the self as identical to the subject of discourse. My concern is not to return to the "body" as a return to the same, but to recover the event of its intersection with the discursive subject. This intersection is not one between the soul and the body in a Cartesian sense, but simply one between dominating and dominated forces. Rather, the

intersection is the site of an ontological difference *between forces*, which creates the subject their point of intersection. This intersection is what creates the possibility of power relations at all. If force were a unitary phenomenon, if "there was no resistance, there would be no power relations, because it would simply be a matter of obedience."(SPP, 29)

Prior to the production of explicit moral codes, the violence of force is enacted not in a primal war of all against all. The context of this force, its cultural location, implies a non-discursive code, a homogeny of the habits of a small population. The violence of force is first done in solidarity with that homogeny, which imposes specific constraints on the bodies of others as it produces an individual discursive subject. Prior to written ethics, this violence is the founding "moral code." Discursive moral code could perhaps be said to be the symbol of this violence, within discourse.

In *The Care of the Self,* we see that this violence deployed, and literally "naturalized," by the implicit rules governing the Greek concept of "nature." The force of this concept of nature, created by the discursive subject, dominates another force, in order to constitute that force as the "fertile ground of the city." This ground is constituted by homogenizing the structure of "domesticated" bodies who are most decisively not thought of as subjects. It is only in the *luxuria* of the production of these domesticated bodies, does the discursive subject first feel comfortable totalizing the force which created it, by identifying that force as "the subject's own body." In so doing it founds the first ethics of self-renunciation.

B. The beginning of / the problem / of beginning.

Three. Restrictive Discipline and Self-Production. Foucault will open his Discourse on Language with a desire never to have opened it at all. "I would have preferred to be enveloped in words," he said, "borne way beyond all possible beginnings. At the moment of speaking, I would like to have perceived a nameless voice, long preceding me... taking up its cadence." (DL, 215) This desire, disrupted by his anxiety as to what discourse fundamentally is, seems to have an impossible object. Clearly, something must condition his possibility of speech, but indeed, what or who that preceding force is -- its primordial name -- effaces itself. A discourse which consisted solely of the repetition of one's own name would be no discourse at all. And further, even the name of the subject of a discourse does not envelop, as Foucault would wish, some prior 'subject in-itself.' If the subject

recognizes himself in discourse, he recognizes himself in a symbol, and in this sense he misrecognizes himself. How could the force which produces a discourse, in any final sense, be articulated in terms of that discourse? A body which speaks cannot be wholly spoken by its own speech. The force which speaks is not thereby reducible to what is spoken; the force of what is spoken is not, itself, what is speaking. So it would seem. And yet, when discourse produces a subject, that subject is taken to be equivalent to the speaker. What discourse always conceals, then, is that "the speaker himself" was not a subject before his production as such within the discourse. Misrecognition happens as soon as rules of exclusion give entrance to people based on their 'identity' as rational, male, human beings. But this identity is not a one-to-one correspondence of the same with itself. As the rules of exclusion divide and produce, they conceal -- they create specific individuals as they obliterate bodies. They create specific truths, as they conceal the will to truth. Yes, "as a proposition, the division between true and false is neither arbitrary, nor modifiable, nor institutional, nor violent." (DL, 218) However, by concealing its own origins, the proposition conceals the event of truth. The will to truth created a methodology for producing truth that came to take "precedence over all experience," (DL 218) – that fails to respond to desire, or to that which exercises power in the will to truth – true discourse is "incapable of recognizing the will to truth that permeates it." (DL 219) Philosophy came to found the individual subject by cutting it off from the world.

Four. Restrictive Production and Self-Discipline. The individual's presence in discourse is that of a partial symbol which alleges to stand for the coherent whole. As such, the presence of the individual in discourse is as totalizing as much as it is mobilizing: the ritualization of beginning disarms the power of discourse even as it honors it. Today we find ourselves in a situation where what Foucault calls disciplinary power, far from being restrictive, aims at sustaining life. The biopolitical agenda leaves the work of regulatory prohibition to the individual himself. However, because the individual himself was first produced by a disciplinary power, this misrecognition of the subject founds that "self-responsibility." At first, disciplinary power exercised itself by way of violent renunciations, or restrictions, in order to defend the state from challenges to its power. But, if previously disciplinary power was restrictive, now the individual restricts himself. The goal of disciplinary power is to sustain life, to maximize life, not to live itself but to *make live*. However, disciplinary powers do not aim to proliferate life in any and all form. As disciplinary power makes life, it structures life. That structure still resembles the restrictive functions disciplinary power once had.

The Greek model of the virile man, produced out of "nature," or the "animal," was first restricted by the demands of his godly genealogy. But to say that man was produced out of a state of nature is to refer back to the concept of nature which was actually produced by a discursive subject. The subject was neither produced out of a "natural" chaos, nor was he "given" a tablet of commandments from God. Instead, the naturalization of the sexual subject is the enforcement of a specific model of the sexual subject. Orbiting around principles of the economy of semen, the sovereignty of the phallus, compulsory female heterosexuality, and the like, this model of the virile male was so ubiquitously dominant it simply did not require much discursive justification.
The subject produces itself out of the blindness of its own force, its own action. This action is "blind" on a 'bodily' level in the productive sense that Nietzsche will say, in Untimely Meditations, that all action is blind. But when this action produces the discursive subject, it is also blind by way of the misrecognition of itself as identical with that discursive subject. Thus, this action will structure of all later exclusionary, discourse-based, institutions and practices. This action produces, through the production of the discursive subject, the domain for a new type of action, political action within the polis of Ancient Greece – an action which is the stylization of existence, and which itself will calcify into, and become dominated by, the later Christian morality and its codes.

PART TWO

A. Chresis.

Five. The Virile Man: The Use of the Mother. We can characterize the Greek's model of the virile man as that of a self-moderating body. This man effects moderation symbolically, by wresting his body from the grasp of his mother through the isomorphic theater of the incest dream. This allows him to do so literally, by dominating his wife. The virile man restricts and produces himself by subordinating his body to the rational soul, and through subordinating others, others who are not yet subjects, to him. This production is neither cleanly symbolic nor cleanly literal. What Artemidorus describes as a symbolic relationship between the subject's dreaming sexual conduct and his social standing is for the most part a literal relationship. Dreaming of sex with one's slaves is auspicious because it 'symbolizes' wealth, yet actually possessing slaves, with whom the subject often had actual sexual relationships, was also the literal substance of that wealth.

The most provocative disruption of this clean literality occurs in the auspicious maternal incest dream. How does the dream of a sexual relationship with one's mother, the one woman on whom all men will have been dependent at some point in their life, foretell autonomy? By deploying the mother as a symbol for an inert, fertile ground, "the subject is indeed seen in a position of activity with respect to the mother who gave birth and nurtured him, and whom he ought to cultivate, honor, serve, maintain, and enrich in return, like a piece of land, a native country, a city… The sexual dream uses the little drama of penetration and passivity to tell the subject's mode of being as destiny has arranged it." (CS, 33) The subject becomes independent from this natural ground by constituting himself as a sexual subject. Because the sexual subject paves the way for the economic and hence, political subject, this dream establishes both the subject's dominance over nature, and the fitness for civic life which is established by literal independence from the mother along with domination of the wife.

Artemidorus exploits an ambiguity between the economic and sexual meanings of Greek words to establish the meaning of this dream. I believe this ambiguity can be mapped on to the ambiguity between an evaluative discourse and the rules of exclusion which select its subjects. Whether sexual penetration is literal, into the wife, or symbolic, into the mother – the right use of the pleasure of sexual relations proves that the subject is independent of the violent "nature" controlling his body, and thus worthy of citizenship. The symbolic rehearsal of reality effected through the interpretation of sexual dreams according to Artemidorus' method, actually enforces the principles for Greek reality. The male sexual subject comes to identify with the discursive subject, and hence to moderate his own body, only through dominating the feminine from whom, he was literally, born. As the subject participates in the moderation of *aphrodisia,* ostensibly, he comes to have a self-control which justifies his control of others. This control is simultaneously literal and symbolic, both a sexual practice and a founding knowledge of oneself.

The final goal of this independence is absolute -- the goal becomes for the subject of discourse to be capable of a pure, unconditioned enjoyment of itself. The first constitution of the male subject is a re-turning to the self by turning away from the care of the mother to the care of the self. The mother is the literal origin of the self, but the symbolic return creates the individual, on the level of discourse, as independent of her precisely by its return. The return is creative, and not a repetition. Through philosophy and pederasty, this return came increasingly to constitute the precondition of the possibility of social and political action.

Six. The Self-Knowledge of Man. The stylization of existence became increasingly dominated by the principle that one must take care of oneself, a philosophical principle which was developed in close correlation with medical praxis. Plutarch went so far as to say that philosophy and medicine were concerned with a "single field," the shared concept of pathos – meaning both excessive passion and physical illness. Both were concerned with bringing order into a state of supposed "passivity" or "disorder." To do so, the medical subject needed to acknowledge that he was actually ill, and not just ignorant. This process, it should be noted, has interesting ramifications when read against the backdrop of the constitution of pregnancy as a medical condition the responsibility for which lie with the male doctor. To truly care for himself, each man had to discover himself in a state of need with respect to the "body" of knowledge concerning the care of the self which was "disseminated" through communities of free men. No longer is there a state of need with respect to the maternal body, the fruits of which were distributed to her children. The symbolic "body" of the body of knowledge is now, actually, constituted by a tacit homosocial exchange. But even further, its pedagogical transmission occurs contemporaneously with the valorization of the pederastic relationship, which was thought to be the only sexual relationship not formed in enslavement to necessity. Hence man seems to be truly free from his symbolic-literal mother. Foucault says that pederasty and philosophy had "twin births." The triad of philosophy, medicine, and pederasty produces a subject which is no longer just moderate, but now *truthful.*

Philosophy was considered to be a permanent exercise of the care of the self. For its sake, one must exclude all other occupations, and "make oneself vacant for oneself." (CS 46) Nonetheless, this 'vacation' was a ceaseless activity. Returning to the self is a turning away from the turn to the other, so that one can incorporate this 'other' into oneself. Making oneself new requires this turning away, first from the self to the other, which is constituted as other when I dominate it, and release myself from its necessity. But this first turn only gives way to the opening of a space in which re-turn away from the other becomes possible, where I can finally say that I "have a body," and in so saying, can always become greater than myself, or freed from myself, in my knowledge of myself.

Whether this freedom is effectuated through philosophy or medicine, it is always a freedom from blindness to knowledge, and the suffering that is alleged to come with that. By discovering through "unnatural" (social) means that at one is in a state of real need, one realizes oneself as having been blind. The blindness of action (the

desire for the pre-individual), is posited as a hindrance to the production of the subject. No action will alter this knowledge. The analogue to Oedipus is clear.

Seven. The Self-Effacement of Man. . The practice of moderation actually came to weaken the model of the virile man. As self-care increasingly comes to imply self-knowledge, virtue is increasingly produced not merely by a moderation of 'natural' impulses, but also by the self-limitation of social ambitions. Truth – more valuable than nature or history – truth conceals the will to truth, soul as soul imprisons body. Man above woman, as subject above object. Self-knowledge weakened the virile man because the desire to recognize himself independent of 'anything inessential' had to mean concealing his dependence on the body, the "mother," as well as the symbolic "father," either discourse (knowledge) or the city (political action). By detaching from his bodily origin, and even from the creative action of metaphor which produces the subject in discourse, man sought to become the calcified object of knowledge even as he himself was the knower.

Eight. The Blind Man / The Use of the Wife For this to be possible, some blindness seems necessary. The subject would have to, after having recognized himself in discourse as a subject, cease to recognize himself as the 'object' of his own self-knowledge. This can explain the strategy behind a Christian shift from the virile male sexual subject to the virginal female. This shift in code does not indicate a significant discontinuity in ethical stylization. The discourse is still produced for, and through, male subjects. The medico-philosophical techniques recommending austerity and abstinence were not advocating renunciation for its own sake, but as a measure and confirmation of one's independence from the inessential.

One should undertake a "labor of thought with itself as object." (62) This was the domain of philosophy – like tuning an instrument, or checking a currency for counterfeit, philosophy was guided by a principle and an attitudinal schema which asked of each thought -- "Who are you? And where are you from?" (64) This labor established a control point which was not in the origin or the object of representations, but the approval which one should or should not give it. Thus one ensured that one would not become attached to what does not come under one's control. This came to constitute the subject's possible distance from political action. Significantly, this principle of stylization resembles the moral code about adultery. In that case, one's main concern is that one does not engage in sex with a woman who is under another man's control, or, really, with any woman but one's wife, without whom one insults not another man but oneself. This moderation never deciphers the meaning of

the object of pleasure, but addresses a relationship between the self and the symbol. Similarly, philosophy establishes a barrier between the self, and the object of knowledge, which is in this case the entire world.

B. Charis

It is this representational solipsism which allows us to account for the sense in which the emergence of the virginal female ideal was not the occasion for the formation of a female subject, but rather a new type of male subject. After the elision of dependence on the mother, but before this virginal ideal, the subject of knowledge comes to depend on an intermediary 'female' other -- the nubile wife. In the relationship established between self-knowledge and knowledge of the 'truth' of pleasures, the virtuous, nubile wife functions as the 'symbol' of the male subject in much the same way as does truthful thought. We can elaborate this transition by examining the etymologies of the words 'virile' and 'nubile.'

On the one hand, the etymology of the very word virile suggests a self-transparency that might indicate self-knowledge. The root "vir--" is simply "man." The *meaning* of this word, however, is defined as masculine force. Etymologically, virile is the symbol of man. However, if the identical discursive subject is a misrecognition, then to say that virile means 'force' is necessary to conceal the fact of that misrecognition. The force producing the subject exceeds any discursive signifiers. The feminine analogue of virile, *nubile*, means "sexually mature / marriageable." However, the etymological root is not "woman," but "to veil oneself." This opacity does not give force to the idea of a female subject, but rather conceals its very possibility. As woman "veils herself," she becomes an object of knowledge. What she veils is the possibility of her self-subjectivation, which could contradict the ostensible 'knowledge' about her – the knowledge that she is necessarily heterosexual, incompletely virtuous, et al. Men, on the other hand, are never constituted in discourse as *pure objects of knowledge* because there presence is not entirely transparent – "man" is virile, and virile means "man." This circular opacity, precisely because it conceals the fact that it conceals, opens up the space for the force of the male subject to structure discourse, and structure knowledge about objects. To be completely transparent as an object of knowledge is to be easily controlled. It is then unsurprising that, along with the injunction to self-knowledge and the medicalization of the body, we increasingly see a weakening of the model of the virile male as ethical sexual subject. In Christianity it is concealed entirely when it becomes the virginal female. This transition actually began as a strategy against 'unnatural' Oedipal wisdom.

If a force must be dominated and concealed *as a force* in order to be fixed and revealed as an object of knowledge, then male self-knowledge, taking itself as its own object, will come to destabilize the dominance of the male subject. Whether this injunction causes the male subject to be the object of pleasure (in pederasty) or of knowledge (in homosocial exchange of philosophy) makes little difference. As Nietzsche says in *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense,* "It seems to me that "the correct perception"-which would mean "the adequate expression of an object in the subject"-is a contradictory impossibility. For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an aesthetic relation: I mean, a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign tongue-for which I there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force." Philosophy is that intermediate sphere: it must provide the individual with a representation solipsism towards anything but the discursive "subject.." Further, it also offers an explanation for the shift from virile male subject to virginal female subject. As the subject faced the contradictory impossibility of expressing itself to itself as an object, it instead took the traditional object of knowledge – the female, and paired it with an image of sexuality that would not contest the dominance of the male subject which grounded discourse.

This is also why Zeus must have been posited as the source of a divine ancestry, whereas our physical, pre-individual origin in the mother has been recast as a bestial nature which we must dominate. Scientific knowledge from this period abounds with justifications of the necessity of woman's conjugal and maternal roles. The concept of 'nature' dictated by the male sexuality assures men that their mothers are little else but potential ground for their own autonomy from nature, that their wives are little else but a training ground for participation in civic and economic life. While women were not constituted as knowing sexual subjects through discourse, the discourse on sexual ethics certainly abounds with techniques for the men who wish to use them for pleasure, which is to be the stepping-stone toward conjugal friendship, and ultimately, truth. The exercise of philosophy in the production of truth existed, not on the basis of a natural justification, but because the gods deemed it right that man "be able to make free use of himself." (CS, 47)

At first, it is as simple as producing female bodies without female subjects – then, possessing a knowledge *of* those bodies, which amounted to a strategic knowledge of the their procreative necessity. If women are now known to need intercourse to be healthy, then men also need to restrict intercourse to be ethical. But as the

virginal incarnation of an ethics of self-renunciation, women would now serve as both 'natural object' in all its limitations, and 'symbolic subject,' in all the limitations of appearing explicitly in discourse. Like the natural mother in the Oedipal dream, the virgin's entry into discourse simultaneously honors her and nullifies her. The point of transition between mother and virgin -- the wife, the fated conjugal lover -- suffers a similar neutralization in production. Increasingly an object of her husband's affection and dependence, she is a symbol for the limitations of the man's political ambitions. It is by way of these limitations – valorized as "true love" -- that the male subject wrests his historical destiny from the hands of Fate – the Sphinx. Thus he evades the 'unnatural wisdom' that would result from his search for self-knowledge, if that search only led him to the misrecognition-production of the identical discursive subject. The double-concealment which valorizes the female virgin as sexual subject actually only serves to cement the dominance of the self-renunciating male. The virginal model is not, then, an actual model of subjectivation available to women –the wife is *useful* to male subjectivation if she 'consents' in charis, and she is transgressing not only her lover, but the dictates of nature and the gods, if she initiates sex, within or especially outside of, the conjugal relationship.

The virginal model does not "select" male subject while "valuing" a female ideal. The virginal ideal conceals a double-movement of selection and valuation by which man, thrown onto the blinding contingency of his birth, projects himself out of nature into discourse – and then out of the blinding exposure to the light of the will to knowledge into the virginal female as symbol for his own sexuality. The blindness of his birth assured him it would return, even if he attempted to evade it. Fatefully, the mother who opened herself to let him into the world opens herself again for him, symbolically, in the maternal incest dream. A symbolic dominance over this mother destroys the body, producing the subject. Yet, with the advent of pederasty, medicine, and philosophy, man becomes needy, and conjugal. The lips threaten to enclose him again – his birth is reversed, and he no more recognizes himself in the needy, discursive subject of political life than he recognized himself as needy, pre-individual force in dependence on his mother. Thus maternal incest is shown to be an insufficient symbol – in Christianity, it synthesizes with the concept of unnatural knowledge to become the myth of the Fall from Eden. Redemption is only possible in a *super*natural virgin birth, a testament to the dominance of the individual man over both his natural origins, and his political ambitions.

The concept of charis, or feminine grace, allowed the conjugal relationship to be established more explicitly in a

discourse which previously debated its value versus the value of the pederastic relationship. The pederastic relationship reached an impasse in the idea that the virile man would never rightly be an object of desire. Women, it was thought, loved man only insofar as man was a master. A man would only play the passive role in a sexual relation if he was overcome by violence or, what was almost worse, if he consented to his own emasculation. The use of pleasure had to be a use of bodies who were not yet subjects – women and slaves. This was not a mere courtesy to boys, if, as we have seen, the isomorphic theater of sexuality actually structured one's social and political life. One *used* one's own body, one's own wife, one's own *property,* as the medium of aphrodisia. To use a man in this way would defile not only the man one used, but also oneself, because it undermined the entire structure of the dominant male subject.

No matter how fecund one's self-enjoyment or self-knowledge may be, the male subject remained tied to women "by necessity" for their procreative function. Thus, new dialogues sought a way to describe conjugal relationships, or compulsory heterosexuality. as an ethical practice. Marriage gave this relationship its political justification, but when man sought independence from his civic identity, he needed a further justification. *Charis,* the grace with which woman was able to consent to man, was this justification, albeit somewhat insufficient to our eyes. The heterosexual relationship came to be *described as* the only sexual encounter in which reciprocal sexual pleasure was possible. This concept of grace in reciprocity was elaborated – the graceful woman neither initiated nor resisted the sexual encounter. Indeed, the reality of this reciprocity is at best questionable. Because women were not self-produced ethical or sexual subjects, it would seem inconsistent for the dominant discourse to attribute to them the ability to take an ethically righteous pleasure from any sexual relationship at all. As Adrienne Rich says in her piece *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence*, "never is it asked whether, under conditions of male supremacy, the notion of [female] 'consent' has any meaning." However, it is equally crucial to note that it is enough for this relationship to produce an unchallenged *appearance* of reciprocity for it to have real effects on the structure of Greek society. It is clear why Foucault's distinction between code and ethic may become significant again: not because the ethics have changed, but precisely because they haven't.

The Greek subject transcends "nature" through purifying his desire of anything "inessential." He becomes master

of his historical destiny and political ambitions by emphasizing his *finitude.* A self-renunciative truth comes more and more to take precedence over and both pleasure and political life. Almost word for word, we see that the ethical stylizations which Foucault had claimed were not present in Greek antiquity, in some form, nonetheless are. What better example of a disciplinary power which *makes live* than compulsory heterosexuality? Although it was naturalized, and left implicit in discourse, this strategy was already one of the founding principles of the dominant sexual subject in Ancient Greek society.

CONCLUSION

A. The Female Subject. Pursuing the question of the possible structure of the female subject first led us to identify, as Foucault says, a continuity of code, and and not ethics, in Greek and Christian cultures. Taking up the question of a gendered rule of exclusion, we then described the continuity of an ethics behind superficial, seemingly contradictory, changes in that code. In the last analysis it appears that the purificatory model, the emphasis on the finitude of the individual, and his subsequent self-renunciation, were continuous both on the level of moral code and ethical stylization. This continuity was waiting for interpretation. We know that these superficial changes in code (the retroactive attribution of juridical "rights") are often the reformist's alternative to ethical revolution. One of those strategic reforms was precisely the enunciation of the Greco-Christian subject as a universal subject. This, however, is not the same strategy as that which substituted the virginal female subject for the virile male subject. How did that latter strategy affect the production of women's bodies, if it did? Historically, what sort of practices and techniques allowed women to become women on the frontiers of subjected identity?

Further – how would the situation change if women were more prounounced as discursive subjects? The inflection is not yet made as a result of, not the actual impossibility of its stylization, but the selective criteria which precedes the explicit expression of those stylizations in discourse. Ancient Greek disciplinary power, as the seed of biopolitical disciplinary power, silently cultivated this principle of selection first through compulsory

heterosexuality – where wife and mother is crowned by marriage, and all of its economic implications. It was further calcified through the cultivation of pederasty as the pedagogical tool for producing subjects, a neglect of the possibility of either female-female pedagogy or female-female sexual or affective relationships. The production of pregnancy as the object of medicine, the psychiatrization of sexual hysteria – in short the elaboration of woman as a medical phenomenon -- is one of the more vulgar, and more modern culminations of that first biopolitical disciplinary power which was expressed through compulsory heterosexuality. More broadly, it was expressed through the production of the pleasure and care of the discursive subject out of the use and domination of a pre-individual bodies. The latter neglect became powerful through the tacit naturalization of the idea that, when they resemble autonomous subjects, women are operating on the frontiers of the civilized world. However, the idea itself is actually correct. Operating on such a frontier is only detrimental to a woman when her location on this frontier is perceived as a threat to the primeval male subject's victory in the production of order out of chaos. Taken up from another angle, it could be not a first threat, but a first birth.

King James Bible, Genesis II:

5: And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ֎

16: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ֎

17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. ֎

18: And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ֎

19: And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. ֎

20: And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. ֎

21: And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ֎

22: And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ֎

23: And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ֎

24: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

B. **The Isomorphic Theater.** Is it an accident that Artemidorus described sexual relations between women, which signify the transmission-production of "feminine knowledge," to be as "as unnatural as those with a beast or a god?" Strangely, Nietzsche will advise that "to live alone one must be a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the third case: one must be both – a philosopher." Clearly, the danger of operating on this frontier between beast and god, is why no ethical, "chivalrous" man would permit woman to live alone in such a way. Yet, can the structures of female-female pedagogy or female-female sexual and affective relationships provide a more profound security? We must remember that the elaboration of woman, as a medical phenomenon, was produced in a tradition which allied medicine with both philosophy and pederasty. These frontiers of human identity, the concepts of "beast," and "god," are names for the territories which have been subordinated to the production of human identity. This location can either be oppressive when the subject is discursive, or liberatory when the subject exceeds, and deterritorializes, that discourse. Can woman be philosopher? First Nietzsche asks, is woman yet capable of friendship? And now another question – can woman be legislator?

In 1983, Foucault will say candidly that "in a society like ours where homosexuality is repressed, and severely so, men enjoy a far greater degree of liberty than women. Ironically, this has resulted in a certain permissiveness with regard to sexual practices between men. Sexual desire is considered more intense for men and therefore in greater need of release." (SCSA 15) Yet, it is clear that "sexuality is something that we ourselves create, much more than the discovery of a secret side of our desires." (SPP 27) This means the force of any specifically sexual desire is itself produced *through* the constitution of the self as a sexual subject. If we recognize this circularity, how do we give new recognition to previously neglected forces? We do not. There is little room for woman as such, nor her sexual being, in society today.

The hidden side of this admission is that "the world [regards] sexuality as the secret of the creative cultural life; it is rather a process of our having to create a new cultural life underneath the ground of our sexual choices." (SPP, 27) The question of identity as a "woman," the question of identity as a "sexual being," are not the most pressing. Rather we find the question of the *transvaluation* of a previously feminine force. "If we are asked to

relate to the question of identity, it has to be an identity to our unique selves. But the relationships we have to have with ourselves are not ones of identity, rather they must be relationships of differentiation, of creation, of innovation." (SPP, 28) The task no longer has anything to do with gender; no longer anything to do with sexuality, or even identity as such. If these husks fall away, their absence can transvaluate the absence of privilege. New questions of the techniques of existence no longer need to respond reactively to the history of women, the history of their sexual subjugation. The affirmative dramatization of those truths is important, potentially beautiful. And unfettering the purity of future possibility as invigorating.

"The fact that women have been, for centuries and centuries, isolated in society, frustrated, despised in many ways and so on, has given them the real possibility of constituting a society, of creating a kind of social relation between themselves outside the social world that was dominated by males. What kinds of emotional experience, what kind of relationships, were possible in a world where women in society had no social, no legal, and no political power?" (SPP, 29) Or, operating, perhaps, on a principle of reversal -- not what was possible, but what will be? If "the philosopher of the future is both artist and doctor -- in one word, legislator," (PI, 66) then the pose we will have struck when this question finds us could be one first legislative act.

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